

MEMORANDUM
City Council Agenda Item

FROM: Rusty Groh
DATE: May 22, 2023
SUBJECT: Order 229-22/23 Declaring Sundays from June 16 to September 23, 2023 the Open Air Sundays Festival on Lower Exchange Street - Sponsored by the Sustainability & Transportation Committee, Councilor Andrew Zarro, Chair

SPONSOR: Danielle West; City Manager
(If sponsored by a Council committee, include the date the committee met and the results of the vote.)

COUNCIL MEETING DATE ACTION IS REQUESTED:

1st Reading 6/5/2023

Final Action 6/5/2023

Can action be taken at a later date: No The organizer needs approval for planning purposes.

Does this item involve a new contract with the City: No

PRESENTATION: Cary Tyson, Executive Director of Portland Downtown, will be available to answer any questions.

I. SUMMARY

Order declaring “Open Air Sundays” on Exchange Street (from Middle Street to Fore Street) from June 16, 2023 to September 23, 2023 as a seasonal festival event.

II. AGENDA DESCRIPTION

On Wednesday, May 24, 2023, the Sustainability & Transportation Committee voted (2-0, Pelletier absent) to recommend this item for Council consideration and passage.

Portland Downtown has applied for a permit to close lower Exchange Street (Middle to Fore streets) every Sunday from June 16 to September 23, 2023, in order to hold an event called 'Open Air Sundays'. It is proposed that restricting use of the roadway to pedestrians and bicyclists will benefit the community economically and socially.

Portland Downtown plans to purchase, install, and remove barricades at the Exchange and Middle and Exchange and Fore streets intersections before and after each Sunday. The organization also plans to study the performance of the street closure and produce a report in conjunction with a third party.

Portland Downtown has confirmed that, by June 5, outreach will have been conducted to businesses and property owners on lower and upper Exchange, Middle Street, Milk Street, and Fore Street, either in writing, in person, or by email. Portland Downtown also hosted a public meeting on May 31, 2023 to discuss their proposal.

City staff have confirmed that, due to the proposed schedule, no parking meter revenue will be lost as a result of the temporary closure. In addition, emergency responders have confirmed that Portland Downtown's proposal will allow sufficient emergency vehicle access to Exchange Street if needed.

Five affirmative votes are required for passage of the Consent Calendar after public comment.

III. BACKGROUND

Open Streets are immensely popular across the globe. This proposal is similar to the efforts the City led in the earliest parts of the pandemic in 2020. However, this amended version proposes use of a much smaller, condensed and manageable area. It is Portland Downtown's opinion that 2020's undertaking had many conflating factors, and it did not serve as a true experiment.

In 2022, New York City saw their Open Streets corridors significantly outperform nearby control corridors on three metrics: sales growth, growth in number of restaurants & growth in number of bars.

IV. INTENDED RESULT AND/OR COUNCIL GOAL ADDRESSED

For the City Council to pass the order declaring "Open Air Sundays" as a festival.

V. FINANCIAL IMPACT

Organizer will pay for all appropriate fees.

VI. STAFF ANALYSIS AND BACKGROUND

Staff Analysis that will not appear in the Agenda Description.

VII. RECOMMENDATION

City staff have reviewed safety factors involved with the closure and are confident that Portland Downtown can host a successful season of Open Air Sundays.

VIII. LIST ATTACHMENTS

1. Open Air Sundays on Lower Exchange Street 6.5.2023
2. 4.10.23 Lower Exchange Road Block Map
3. PD Permit App Open Streets Lower Exchange 3.10.23
4. Public Comment Order 229

Prepared by:

Rusty Groh

Date: 05/22/2023